Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PARIS 01867 01 OF 02 201940Z

43
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 058072
R 201928Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7017
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY LISBON
USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 01867

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, FR, PINT, PGOV
SUBJECT: SOCIALIST PARTY FOREIGN POLICY VIEWS

REF: A) STATE 8296; B) PARIS 1447; C) STATE 7807

SUMMARY. SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ROBERT PONTILLON CALLED ON DCM ON JANUARY 16 AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST TO DISCUSS DEMARCHE MADE JANUARY 14 AT DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTION (REF A). DCM CAME DOWN HARD ON AMERICAN PREOCCUPATIONS IN SECURITY FIELD STRESSING THAT INCREASED SOVIET MILITARY ADVENTURISM MIGHT BE ENCOURAGED BY PRESENCE OF COMMUNIST PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. NOTING THAT SOCIALIST/COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO MAINTAIN A HIGH LEVEL OF DEFENSE EXPENDITURES, DCM ALSO DISCUSSED FEAR OF AN AMERICAN BACKLASH AGAINST MAINTENANCE OF US COMMITMENT TO EUROPE. PONTILLON STRESSED PS COMMITMENT TO THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, NOTED IMPORTANCE OF SOCIALIST/COMMUNIST COALITIONS IN EUROPE IF REAL CHANGES ARE TO BE MADE IN EUROPEAN SOCIETY AND SAID THAT PS HOPED FOR QUICKLY RENEWED CONTACTS BETWEEN MITTERRAND AND THE SECRETARY. PONTILLON'S RESPONSES DID NOT SUBSTAN-
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PAGE 02 PARIS 01867 01 OF 02 201940Z

TIALLY VARY FROM THOSE ALREADY REPORTED (REF B). END

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

SUMMARY.

1. SECURITY AND THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE: DCM POINTED OUT THAT AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION DISTRUSTS THE PROSPECT OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT OF ITS MAJOR EUROPEAN ALLIES. SUCH SUSPICION, HE WENT ON, COULD FIND EXPRESSION IN A BACKLASH AGAINST CONTINUED US COMMITMENTS TO EUROPE. PONTILLON AGREED, EXPLAINING THAT THE PS ALSO FEARS THE POSSIBILITY THAT A RISING EUROPEAN CURRENT OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE US MAY FIND EXPRESSION IN ANTI-ALLIANCE SENTIMENT. THE PS ALSO FEARS THAT PUBLIC HOPES RAISED BY VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS OF DETENTE WILL LEAD TO SLACKENED EUROPEAN INTEREST IN ASSUMING A LARGER SHARE OF THE COMMON DEFENSE BURDEN. THE PS, PONTILLON SAID, IS "PREOCCUPIED BY THE PROBLEM OF EUROPEAN SECURITY, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND CAN ONLY BE FOUND THROUGH A PRIVILEGED ALLIANCE WITH THE US." WHILE HOPING THAT SOME DAY EUROPE WILL COME TO A COMMON AND REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF ITS DEFENSE NEEDS, THE SOCIALISTS WILL CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE IS CURRENTLY THE KEYSTONE OF EUROPEAN SECURITY. AS PROOF, PONTILLON NOTED THAT IF A LEFT GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER IN FRANCE, IT WOULD "CONTINUE FRENCH SUPPORT FOR STANDARDIZATION, INTEROPERABILITY AND OTHER FORMS OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION."

2. FURTHER CONTACTS BETWEEN MITTERRAND AND THE SECRETARY: PONTILLON STRESSED THE "IMMENSE VALUE" WHICH THE PS PUTS ON CONTINUED CONTACT WITH THE SECRETARY. HE SAID MITERRAND HOPED THE SECRETARY'S NEXT TRIP TO PARIS WOULD PRESENT AN OCCASION FOR A MEETING AND FURTHER EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

3. PS/COMMUNIST RELATIONS: DCM NOTED AMERICAN CONCERNS OVER PCF INFLUENCE IN A POSSIBLE FUTURE LEFT GOVERNMENT. PONTILLON ARGUED THAT THE PS IS "AT LEAST AS SKEPTICAL AS YOU OF THE EXTENT AND REALITY OF CHANGES IN THE PCF." BUT HE NOTED A FEW ENCOURAGING FACTORS: THERE ARE NEW MEMBERS OF THE PCF WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN EXPOSED TO THE INFLUENCE OF STALINISM; THE EXPERIENCE OF SIMULATING

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CONVERSION TO DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM MAY IN FACT THROUGH PRACTICE LEAD TO CONVERSION. PONTILLON WENT ON TO POINT OUT SEVERAL AREAS IN WHICH THE PS IS CAREFULLY WATCHING PCF ACTION. THERE IS FIRST THE FEAR THAT THE PCF MAY SEEK A "UNION OF THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE", A DIRECT APPEAL TO GAULLISTS AND CENTRISTS MADE OVER THE HEAD OF THE PS. SECOND, PONTILLON SAID THAT AN EQUALLY PREOCCUPYING PROBLEM FOR MITTERRAND IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PCF

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

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DESIRE TO DROP ITS MOST AGGRESSIVE AND FEAR-PRODUCING
LANGUAGE (THE "DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT"; SEE

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PAGE 01 PARIS 01867 02 OF 02 201957Z

43
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 058409
R 201928Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7018
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY LISBON
USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 01867

EXDIS

PARIS 1391) IS A MASK FOR CONTINUED CLAIMS TO BE THE
UNIQUE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FRENCH WORKING CLASS, A
CLAIM INTOLERABLE TO THE PS. PONTILLON CONCLUDED BY
SAYING THAT THE PS SHARED OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE PCF TO
A DEGREE WHICH WE DID NOT PERHAPS REALIZE.

4. ANGOLA: PONTILLON, AFTER EXPLAINING THAT THE PS
BELIEVES IN CONTINUED EQUALITY OF MILITARY FORCES BET-
WEEN EAST AND WEST, WAS ASKED BY DCM IF THIS BELIEF
EXTENDED TO THE ANGOLAN SITUATION. PONTILLON ANSWERED BY
THE CURIOUS STATEMENT THAT THE PS, WHILE RECOGNIZING
THE POTENTIAL FOR DESTABILIZATION INHERENT IN THE ANGOL-
AN SITUATION, CANNOT FREEZE ITS POSITION. COMMENT:
PONTILLON MAY HAVE BEEN TRYING TO WARN US THAT SOME PS
STATEMENTS ON ANGOLA WILL NOT PROVIDE AN EVEN-HANDED
CRITIQUE OF EVENTS THERE.

5. ITALY: AFTER DCM ASKED IF PONTILLON LOOKED FOR A
RAPID EVOLUTION IN THE ITALIAN SITUATION, PONTILLON
NOTED THAT ITALIAN SOCIALIST (PSI) LEADER DE MARTINO

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

HAD DECIDED TO PUT AN END TO THE "DOUBLE GAME" IN WHICH ITALIAN COMMUNISTS WERE AT ONCE FREE TO ALLY THEMSELVES TO CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND WERE ABLE TO CRITICIZE THE PSI FOR SO DOING. PONTILLON'S REMARKS DID NOT SUBSTAN-

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TIALLY DEVIATE FROM THE LINE HE HAD TAKEN TWO DAYS EARLIER (REF B).

6. SPAIN: AFTER DCM HAD URGED THAT PS USE ITS INFLUENCE TO MODERATE SPANISH SOCIALIST ATTACKS ON JUAN CARLOS AND HIS CABINET, PONTILLON SAID THAT RECENTPOLLS GIVE THE COMMUNISTS IN SPAIN BETWEEN 10 AND 13 PERCENT OF THE VOTE WHILE 25 PERCENT OF THOSE POLLED PRONOUNCE THEMSEL-VES IN FAVOR OF THE SOCIALISTS. PONTILLON CONSIDERS THAT THIS IS A FAVORABLE EVOLUTION WHICH WILL CONTINUE AND SAID THAT HE FOUND NO REASON FOR INQUIETUDE ON SPAIN.

7. COMMENT AND IMPRESSIONS: PONTILLON WAS AT PAINS TO DISTINGUISH THE PS AS A WHOLE FROM A FEW RECENT STATE-MENTS BY WHAT HE CALLED PARTY HOTHEADS ("EXCITES"). HE CLEARLY BELIEVES THAT HE HAS LAID OUT FOR US A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES WHICH BUILDS ON WHAT MITTERRAND TOLD THE SECRETARY. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PS SENIOR LEADERSHIP MAINTAINS A POSITION OF CONCERN ON EUROPEAN AND ATLANTIC MATTERS WHICH GENERALLY SUPPORTS OUR OWN; WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE PARTY IS HAVING SOME DIFFICULTY IN GOING ON THE RECORD WITH THAT POSITION. AS MITTERRAND INDICATED ON NOVEMBER 25 TO THE SECRETARY AND AS PONTILLON HAS TWICE EXPOUNDED, THE PS REMAINS CONFIDENT OF ITS ABILITY TO (A) OUTPOLL THE PCF AND (B) BRING THEM ALONG ON SECURITY ISSUES. DETAILS, HOWEVER, ARE LACKING.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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